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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAMAKO 000800

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PINS](#) [PINR](#) [ML](#)

SUBJECT: POLICE ROUND UP MORE GANDA-IZO SUSPECTS AND RAID
VILLAGE AFTER SHOOT OUT IN GAO

REF: A. BAMAKO 00778

[B](#). 07 BAMAKO 01356

Classified By: Political Officer Aaron Sampson, Embassy Bamako, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1.(U) Security forces in Gao are continuing their sweep for suspects following the September 1 killings of four Tuaregs in a village south of Ouatagouna near the Malian border with Niger (Ref. A). During the early morning hours of September 14 a shoot out between security forces and bandits, presumably belonging to the Songhai and Peuhl group known as the Ganda-Izo, occurred in the Chateau neighborhood of Gao in northern Mali. The Ganda-Izo is a spin-off of the Gandakoy self-defense militia which fought against ethnic Tuaregs and Arabs during northern Mali's 1991-1996 rebellion.

2.(C) The September 14 incident in Gao occurred at a house near the residence of Mohamed ag Akiline, a Tuareg who is the Director of the Malian Agency for Northern Development (ADN). Armed guards have been stationed outside ag Akiline's house since November 2007 when he, along with the Governor of Gao, Col. Amadou Baba Toure, and the Algerian Consul were the targets of an "assassination" plot allegedly hatched by Gandakoy veterans (Ref. B). After the shoot out on September 14, some Embassy contacts initially reported that the gun fire was centered around ag Akiline's residence. On September 17, however, ag Akiline told the Embassy that the Ganda-Izo members were holed up in a different residence nearby. He said the security forces posted around his house responded after some shots were fired in their direction. There were no reported injuries. Police arrested some individuals and several others escaped.

3.(U) On September 16 the Malian military attacked a suspected Ganda-Izo hideout in the village of Fafa situated 75 KM south of Ansongo toward the Mali-Niger frontier. One soldier and one suspect were reportedly killed. An unknown number of individuals were wounded. After the attack, military spokesman Col. Abdoulaye Coulibaly told local press that security forces were patrolling the area and that the army would "never accept the existence of a militia" in Mali. The Malian army reportedly captured several individuals after the operation in Fafa.

4.(U) Fafa is the village of Amadou Diallo, a founding member of the Gandakoy and the presumed leader of the Ganda-Izo. Diallo is a former Malian army officer who deserted in the 1990s to create the Patriotic Gandakoy Movement (MPGK). At the conclusion of 1991-1996 rebellion the Malian government assigned Diallo, as part of the peace agreement with various rebel group leaders, to a position overseeing Malian imports at the port of Dakar in Senegal. Diallo abandoned this post about 5 months ago. He is currently believed to be in the Ansongo-Gao area.

5.(U) On September 17 a Malian newspaper, L'Independant,

published an interview with a resident of Fafa who witnessed the attack. "We don't understand the government's attitude," said the Fafa resident. "The government is unable to assure our security. Now, when a son of our country takes up this mission, the government rises up to attack him with heavy weaponry as though he were an enemy. This is unacceptable." According to the L'Independant, another Fafa resident added: "If the government fought Bahanga and Fagaga with the same determination now directed against the Ganda-Izo, we would have ended banditry in the Kidal region ages ago."

6.(C) Comment: Malian security forces have arrested an estimated 44 individuals since the September 1 murders of four Tuaregs in the village of Hourara near the Mali-Niger frontier. It is unclear why some members of the Gandakoy have regrouped as the Ganda-Izo now, after so many years of inactivity. Following the September 1 murders, some Malian contacts speculated that the Ganda-Izo was seeking to avenge damage to property and animals incurred during the May 12 attack by a Tuareg rebel group in Ansongo. The September 14 shootout in Gao and Malian security forces' muscled response suggest that something greater is afoot and many now believe that Diallo is trying to reap some benefits, ala Ibrahim Bahanga, from the on going peace negotiations between Mali, Algeria and Tuareg rebels from Kidal.

7.(C) Comment continued: There are several important differences between Diallo and Bahanga that may help explain Mali's forceful reaction to the Ganda-Izo. Although Bahanga is responsible for placing land mines that have killed and displaced civilians, his attacks have generally targeted the Malian military. The Ganda-Izo's strategy, on the other

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hand, seems to entail attacking civilians like the four Tuaregs murdered on September 1. In addition, Mali may regard Diallo, as an ethnic Peuhl, as one of its own, as opposed to Bahanga and other Tuareg rebels who are more closely associated with north Africans for both ethnic and linguistic reasons. The appearance of a home-grown militia movement ready and willing to attack Malian civilians in northern Mali, at the very moment when negotiations over the implementation of the Algiers Accords with Tuareg rebels are once again on track, may be enough to stir Malian security forces into rapid response mode.

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